



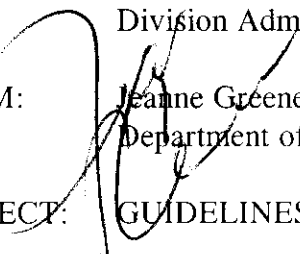
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

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MEMO PERD #32/01

October 15, 2001

TO: Department Directors
Division Administrators

FROM:  Jeanne Greene, Director
Department of Personnel

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING MAIL

In response to the many questions regarding the processing of mail in our State offices, the Office of the Governor and the Nevada Division of Emergency Management along with health professionals, the FBI, and the Nevada State Health Division, have developed the attached guidelines as well as a fact sheet on anthrax. Please disburse this information to your employees as soon as possible so they are aware of the steps to be taken if they are confronted with suspicious mail. Additionally, information will be forthcoming regarding training for State employees responsible for the processing of mail.

For clarification, if an employee receives a letter/package containing a powder or written threat, please direct them to call Capitol Police or the non-emergency number of their local law enforcement agency.

JG:cp

Attachment

cc: Agency Personnel Liaisons
Agency Personnel Representatives

GUIDELINES FOR MAILROOMS

Many people have questions about how mailrooms and offices should handle mail that may contain a written threat of chemical or biological material inside, or mail that may contain some form of powder. Following are common sense steps to take in workplaces. They have been developed jointly by health professionals, the FBI, the, Nevada State Health Division and Nevada Division of Emergency Management. Please feel free to share this information with businesses and other interested individuals in your community.

The risk of contracting any disease from an envelope is extremely low. General awareness of one's surroundings and suspicious mail is appropriate.

General precautions for those who handle large volumes of mail:

- ◆ Wash your hands with warm soap and water before and after handling the mail.
- ◆ Do not eat, drink or smoke around mail.
- ◆ If you have open cuts or lesions on your hands, disposable latex gloves may be appropriate.
- ◆ Surgical masks, eye protection or gowns are **NOT** necessary or recommended.

If a letter is received that contains powder or contains a written threat:

1. Do not shake or empty the envelope.
2. If possible, place the envelope in two Ziploc bags.
3. Isolate the specific area of the workplace so that no one disturbs the item.
4. Evacuation of the entire workplace is **NOT** necessary at this point.
5. Call your local law enforcement non-emergency number, and tell them what you received, and what you have done with it. Indicate whether the envelope contains any visible powder or if powder was released.
6. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for one minute.
7. Do not allow anyone to leave the office that might have touched the envelope.
8. When emergency responders arrive, they will provide further instructions on what to do.

Important:

- ◆ Do not panic.
- ◆ Do not walk around with the letter or shake it.
- ◆ Do not merely discard the letter.

GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL MAIL HANDLING

Many people have questions about how mailrooms and offices should handle mail that may contain a written threat of chemical or biological material inside, or mail that may contain some form of powder. Following are common sense steps to take in workplaces. They have been developed jointly by health professionals, the FBI, the, Nevada State Health Division and Nevada Division of Emergency Management. Please feel free to share this information with businesses and other interested individuals in your community.

The risk of contracting any disease from an envelope is extremely low. General awareness of one's surroundings and suspicious mail is appropriate.

If a letter is received that contains powder or contains a written threat:

1. Do not shake or empty the envelope.
2. Isolate the specific area of the workplace so that no one disturbs the item.
3. If possible, place the envelope in two Ziploc bags.
4. Call your local law enforcement non-emergency number, and tell them what you received, and what you have done with it. Indicate whether the envelope contains any visible powder or if powder was released.
5. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for one minute.
6. When emergency responders arrive, they will provide further instructions on what to do.

Important:

- ◆ Do not panic.
- ◆ Do not walk around with the letter or shake it.
- ◆ Do not merely discard the letter.

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by the spore-forming bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Anthrax most commonly occurs in hoofed animals and can also infect humans.

Symptoms of disease vary depending on how the disease was contracted, but usually occur within 7 days after exposure. The serious forms of human anthrax are inhalation anthrax, cutaneous anthrax, and intestinal anthrax.

Initial symptoms of inhalation anthrax infection may resemble a common cold. After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Inhalation anthrax is often fatal.

Cutaneous anthrax causes deep, dark but painless ulcers in the skin.

Direct person-to-person spread of anthrax is extremely unlikely, if it occurs at all. Therefore, there is no need to immunize or treat contacts of persons ill with anthrax, such as household contacts, friends or coworkers, unless they also were exposed to the same source of infection. We do not advise the stock piling of antibiotics or the taking of any antibiotics except upon the direct advice and prescription of your local physician.

In persons exposed to anthrax, infection can be prevented with antibiotic treatment. Early antibiotic treatment of anthrax is essential -- delay lessens chances for survival. Anthrax usually is susceptible to penicillin, doxycycline, and fluoroquinolones antibiotics.

There is no anthrax vaccine available to the general public.

This material has been developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reuse or reproduction of this material is authorized. Information updated September 2001.